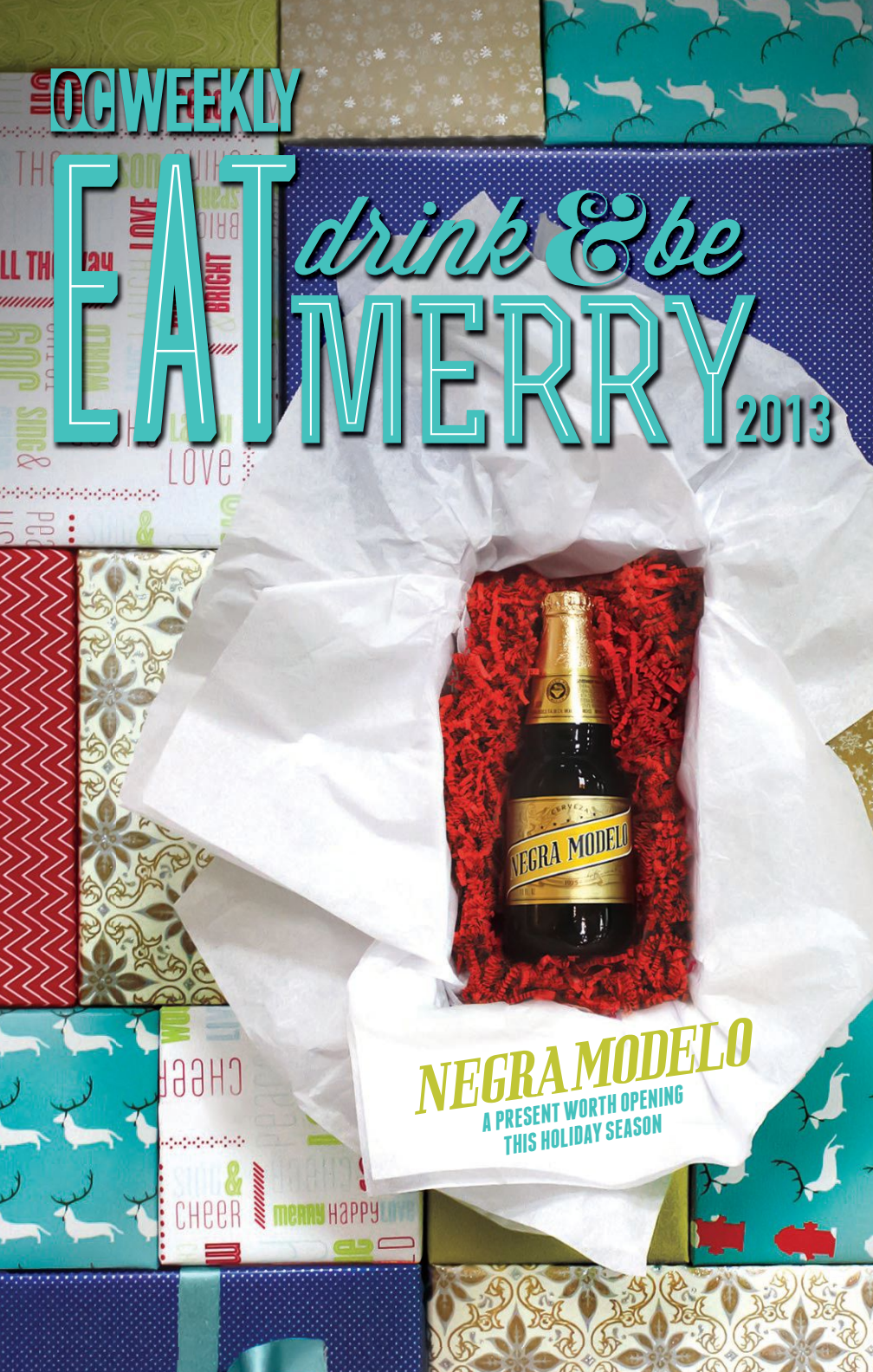
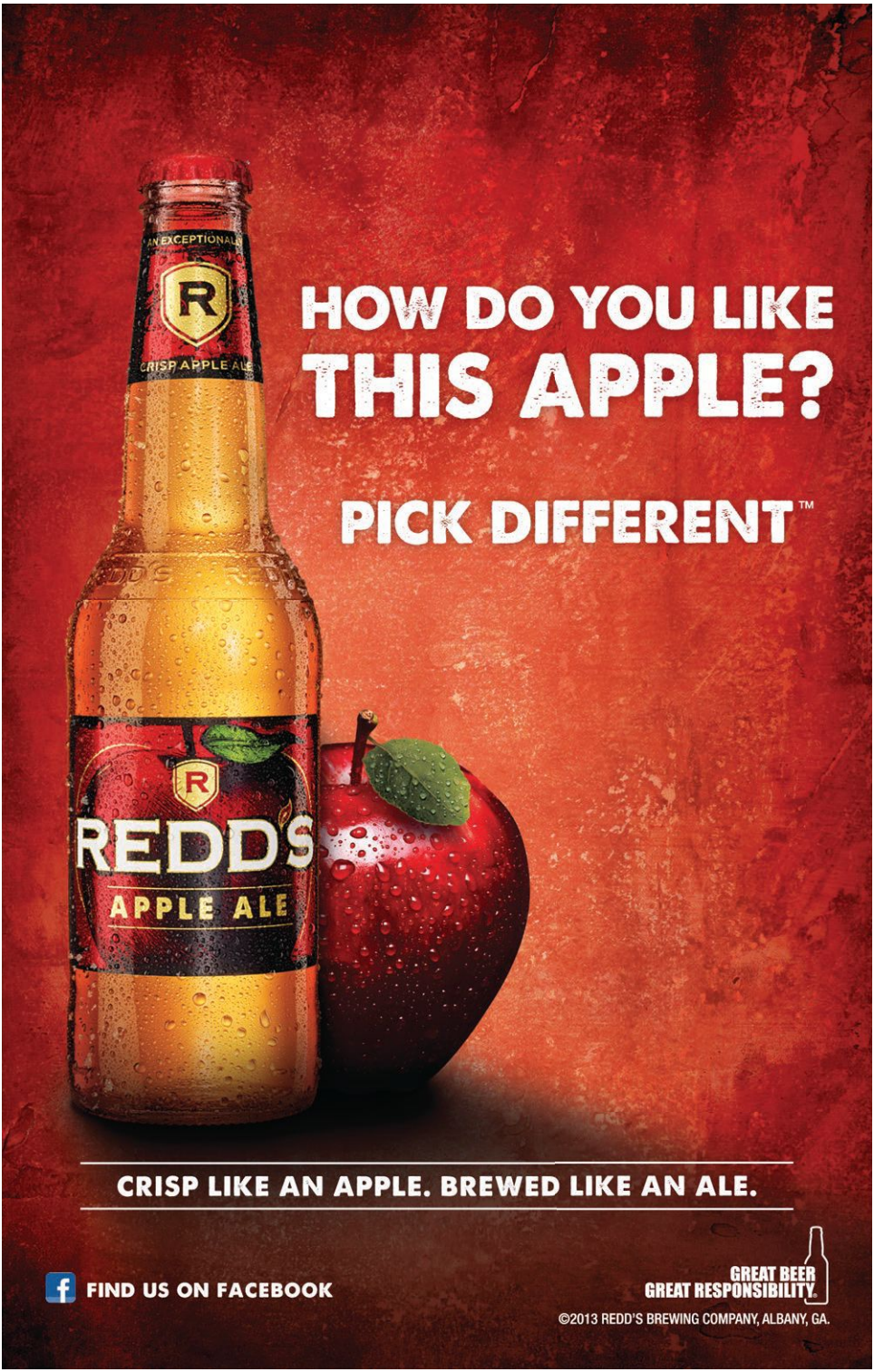
OC WEEKLY

EAT drink & be MERRY 2013

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OC WEEKLY

EAT drink & be MERRY 2013

As each day passes, we get closer and closer to the holidays. Every year we tell ourselves that we will begin shopping for loved ones well before due time, and we relish in holiday cheer just as long as we can. It seems as though time flies like the speed of light before we are able to get a grasp on all that Orange County has to offer during this time of year. OC Weekly is here to help, as we present to you Eat, Drink, and Be Merry–a guide for all things holiday.

OC Weekly has gathered an array of fun and helpful holiday tips to help you dive right in! Enjoy our handy holiday entertainment check list, ideas for gifts that give back, tips & tricks to help you shop and save on Black-Friday, and a couple delightful recipes for you to bring to your holiday family gathering. Happy Holidays from our 'home' to yours!

TABLE of CONTENTS

8 Handy Holiday Entertaining Checklist

10 Consider Gifts That Give Back This Holiday Season

16 Tips For Taking Better Photos

22 How To Use Your Smartphone To Help You Shop & Save

28 Great Gifts For People On-The-Go

30 Great Gifts For Outdoor Enthusiasts

34 Cranberry Apple Crisp

36 Cherry Cheesecake Bars

38 Holiday Listings

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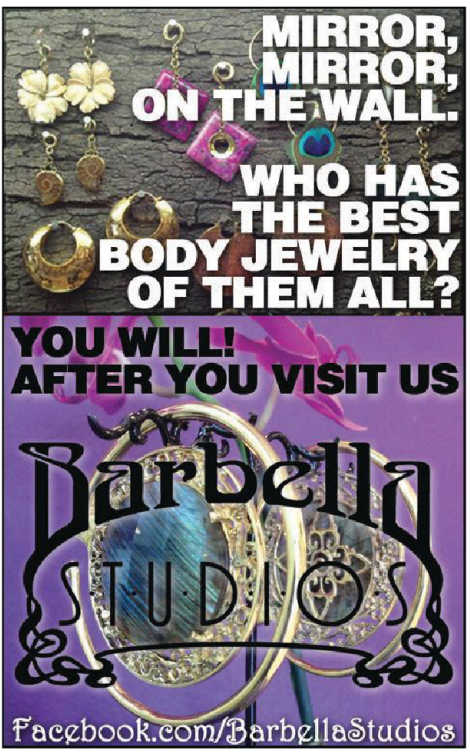


A HANDY HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING CHECKLIST

One of the best parts about holiday entertaining is spending quality time with friends and family. If you're rushing around trying to cook and prepare everything, your food may taste great, but you're missing out on a key element of the season – togetherness.

But the quality of your food doesn't need to suffer for great conversation, say cooking experts.

With a little advanced planning you can have it all at your holiday gathering – both a delicious, hearty meal, and quality time with your friends and family, says Christy Jordan, author of the new cookbook "Come Home to Supper," a collection of budget-conscious, kid-friendly recipes designed for busy families.

Jordan is offering this handy checklist for a more fulfilling holiday entertaining season:

1 Two to Three Days Ahead

SHOP FOR GROCERIES AND MAKE DESSERT.

"If I know I am going to have company, I like to make my dessert a few days ahead of time so when it's time for dessert, I know all I have to do is cut and serve!" says Jordan.

Jordan points out that refrigerator cakes are wonderful for holiday entertaining, because they can be made in advance and actually get better as the days go by. They also taste great cold.

2 One to Two Days Ahead

ASSEMBLE THE MAIN COURSE.

Many entrees can be made ahead of time, such as chilly weather soups and stews. Casseroles also do very well if assembled ahead of time and then placed covered in the fridge to be baked just before supper.

You may also consider doubling your recipe and freezing half for later use. Since the season is a busy time of year, having extra meals on hand can save you a mid-week headache.

3 The Big Day

SET THE TABLE, MAKE THE BREAD, POP THE ENTREE ON THE STOVE OR IN THE OVEN. ENJOY!

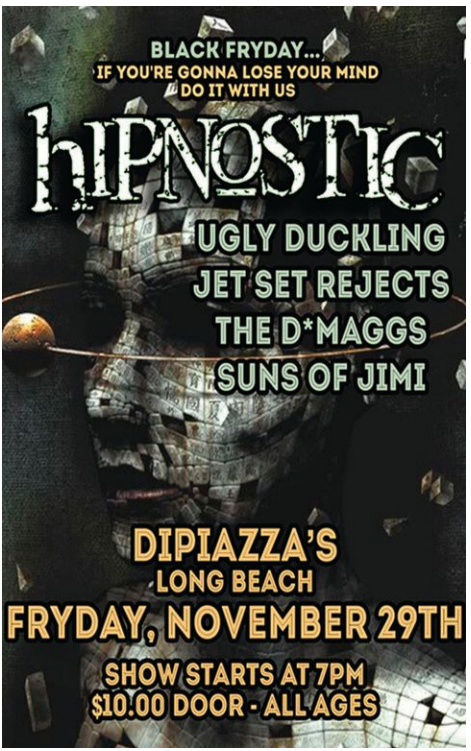
"I like to have as many things done as possible before company arrives so I have more time to enjoy my guests," says Jordan.

Making most of the meal beforehand can save you valuable minutes just before supper to bake fresh bread – a true treat and easy to make.

More useful cooking and entertaining tips can be found at www.SouthernPlate.com.

Don't be stressed by your entertaining schedule. Plan to be relaxed and ready when your company arrives.

Credit: (StatePoint)



While the latest video game can make a big hit, the most meaningful gifts are often ones that help those in need. The holidays are the perfect time to give a charitable gift that could make a profound difference in someone's life.

Donating your time or money to a charity in honor of a loved one is a great way to reach out and help others this holiday season:

Work at a Soup Kitchen

Many people have made working at a soup kitchen a holiday tradition. Something as simple as giving the homeless and hungry a hot meal and a full stomach can make a person's day. Contact your local soup kitch-

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en to see how you can volunteer. If you don't have time to help out in person, consider donating non-perishable goods, as many soup kitchens have a food pantry as well.

Rescue Gifts

You can also help provide essentials for people in need by giving a "Rescue Gift" in the name of friends and family. Rescue Gifts are charitable gifts that support humanitarian aid work and represent the kinds of emergency relief and services that the International Rescue Committee (IRC) provides to refugees and others uprooted by war and disaster.

Rescue Gifts, such as a pair of baby goats, can help put a family in drought-ridden Somalia back on the road to recovery by helping to start a new herd. Or the gift of a year of school can help supply the tuition, books and other materials to send a young Afghan girl to school.

Help Children

The perfect gift can help brighten up the life of a child in even the most dire situations. There are an estimated 45 million people around the world who have been uprooted from their homes by war, persecution and disaster, many of them children. Sometimes, the need for love and reassurance is just as great as the need for food and shelter.

Consider giving the International Rescue Committee's Teddy Bear and Creativity Kit to a child on behalf of friends or family as a gift this holiday. In crisis zones like Syria, children hold tight to their beloved teddy bears, finding emotional support in a simple toy. A Res-

cue Gift like the Teddy Bear and Creativity Kit can provide three children with their own teddy bears, as well as a toy and coloring kit that will help them cope with the psychological distress of war and upheaval. For more information, visit www.Rescue.org/Gifts.

> **"Sometimes, the need for love and reassurance is just as great as the need for food and shelter."**

"Support from the purchase of Rescue Gifts allows the IRC to address crisis places like Syria, in addition to offering ongoing support and lifesaving care for people around the world affected by catastrophes that have slipped from the headlines," says Nancy Haitch, VP of External Relations at the IRC.

While conventional presents are often soon forgotten, a charitable gift can have a lasting effect beyond the holiday season.

Credit: (StatePoint)

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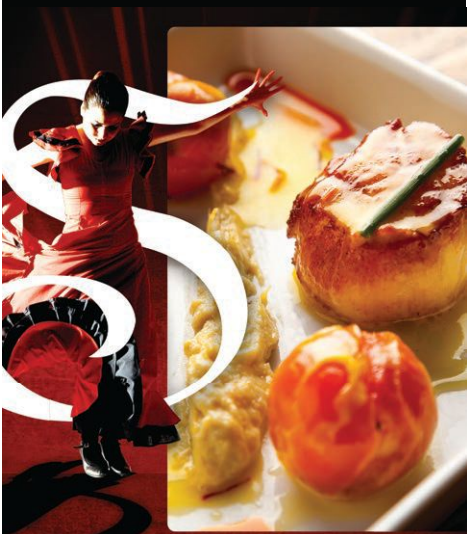

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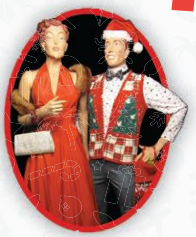

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OC Weekly's Holiday Gift Guide will be your shopping support buddy for four weeks during this holiday season, educating you on the perfect gifts to wrap up for you and yours! To make it even more helpful, we will be giving away some of the featured gifts during our Holiday Gift Guide Sweepstakes!

Enter to win at www.ocweekly.com/holidays2013/win to score some free loot.

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TIPS FOR TAKING BETTER PHOTOS

From selfies to portraits of lunch, more people these days are taking photographs in more places. But there's a big difference between great photos and throwaways – and a big difference between great photographers and anybody with a smartphone.

But don't despair.

"Anyone can learn to take better photos," says Lucas Gilman, a professional adventure photographer whose work for such magazines as National Geographic and Sports Illustrated has taken him all over the globe.

Gilman is offering photographers of all levels tips for producing more compelling photography:

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Don't Wait

Shoot images in the moment. Never put anything off until tomorrow. The weather could change, the leaves on the trees could blow. Anything that can happen will.

Think Narrow

When photographing a scene that mixes bright and dark, the camera will lose much of the detail and you'll end up with overexposed white and underexposed black.

Instead, look for mid-tones with little difference between the brightest highlights and darkest shadow. Flowers and trees, for example, are often best photographed on overcast, drizzly days.

Golden Hour

"My favorite time to shoot is right after sunrise or just before sunset, when the sun is low in the sky. It makes for more interesting and dramatic lighting," says Gilman. "Shoot around these hours and you'll be amazed at the great images you make."

Working the Subject

Once you've found your spot and the light is right: shoot, shoot, shoot. Take different shots from different angles and unusual viewpoints.

"Don't be afraid to take ten shots and edit out nine later," says Gilman. "SanDisk Compact Flash and SD cards are super affordable these days." More information can be found at www.sandisk.com.

Shooting landscapes

Something dynamic in the foreground adds depth and scale. Look for a high vantage point, such as a balcony or rooftop. Study the light, especially when shooting from high angles. Shadows can be your best friend, and make for very interesting photos.

Protect

"Photography is about making a fleeting moment permanent, whether it's a kayaker hurtling over a waterfall or the look on your daughter's face when she opens that gift she's been hoping for all year," says Gilman. "These events can't be recreated. Reliable photo storage is critical for protecting your work."

A reliable external hard drive data back-up system allows you to seamlessly transfer and store all your digital content with one system.

For example, the Evolution Series with Thunderbolt from G-Technology lets you capture, transfer, edit and distribute media files all within a single storage system. Whether you're traveling, or at home editing your photos, a high-performance external hard drive can make working with your photos easier. More information can be found at www.g-technology.com

And you can simplify the task with Time Machine backup, which works with Mac computers to automatically back up files.

For more photography tips and talk, follow Gilman at www.Twitter.com/lucasgilman.

Don't settle for fuzzy, uninteresting images. By paying attention to light and being persistent, you can take a better photo. Just be sure to protect and store your work!

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HOW TO USE YOUR SMARTPHONE *to help you* SHOP AND SAVE ON BLACK FRIDAY

During the holiday season, which kicks off with Black Friday, the stores can be even more stress-inducing than usual – but only if you don't plan.

Luckily, being prepared is easier than ever. Over three-fifths of US adults have smartphones, according to a study by *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, changing the way people communicate, do their jobs and even shop. To better navigate this busy shopping season and save time and money in the process, use your smartphone as your personal shopping assistant.

If you aren't yet up to speed with how mobile technology can help with shopping, here are some ideas for how to use your smartphone to save money and time this holiday season:

• Plan ahead:

If you have a preferred shopping mall or shopping district, view its website on your phone to consult its directory, get a map of the mall, find out about store hours and learn about special events and deals.

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· Simplify with Technology:

It's easy to get overwhelmed by the bombardment of ads touting coupons, Black Friday sales and holiday store hours. By simplifying, you can sort through the heavy stream of information coming at you via television, radio as well as print and online media. Use your smartphone – it's called smart for a reason – to help you find deals based on where you like to shop and what products you're looking for.

For example, Shoptopia.com and the Shoptopia iPhone app filter products, retailers and promotions to deliver personalized, timely and relevant shopping information and deals based on your search criteria and location. It can even be a social experience, as users can share favorites with friends.

Shoptopia is available as a free download in the iTunes app store and can be accessed at www.Shoptopia.com/news.

· Make a list:

Santa makes a list for good reason and so should you. Before hitting the stores, create a shopping list on your phone. You can use a shared document to store everyone in the family's wish list in one place. This will help you avoid potentially large impulse purchases stimulated by sales and help you stay focused on what you really need. Use personal finance apps to help you stay on budget as you shop.

Don't ruin the "the most wonderful time of the year" with shopping stress. Take advantage of new tools that can make your time in the store more productive and cost-effective – from identifying new trends to finding the best deals.

Credit: (StatePoint)

The Barrel Tree in Lynchburg, Tennessee. All 140 barrels of it.

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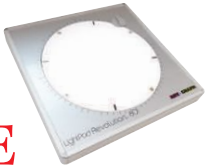

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GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS *for* PEOPLE ON-THE-GO

No matter how hard we try, life just won't slow down. And with the increasing need to be connected all the time, a few minutes off the grid could mean missing out on something. That's why there are more options than ever to find the perfect tech gift for people with very busy schedules.

Whether you need a gift for a frequent traveler, a sleep-deprived student, or a parent constantly shuttling between errands, these gifts can fit their needs this holiday season:

Frequent Traveler

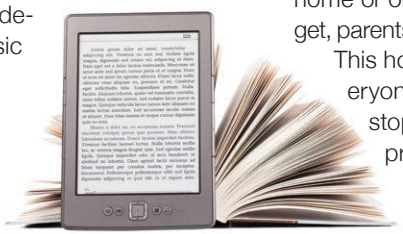
For someone who is always traveling for work or constantly seeking out a new adventure, consider a gift card to an e-book store so he or she will always have something to read on a tablet while waiting to take off.

Students

Students are busier than ever before. Relentlessly running between classes, club meetings and internships (and maybe a party or two), students need a device that is easy to carry around, like the HP Spectre13 x2.

The HP Spectre13 x2 is a 2 in 1 Ultrabook designed to be fast and lightweight whether it's operating as a tablet or a PC. The device offers access to photos, music and more, even while on-the-go.

With a notebook and tablet in one, students can take notes in Physics class and then use the same device to listen to music using Beats Audio on the walk across campus. For more information, visit www.hp.com.



Busy Parent

While you can't give busy parents more hours in a day, there are some gifts that could make their lives a bit easier.

Consider a gift that connects everything they want at once, such as HP Connected. While parents never know when they'll need to share that adorable picture of their kid's first trip to the zoo, with HP Connected – which is included in new HP PCs and tablets or available as an app for download – they can always be prepared. HP Connected Photo offers seamless access to photos from mobile devices or social media sites like Facebook in one location – and parents can make the most of these photos by printing them or even creating cards and invitations directly from the application.

In addition, with HP Connected Music they can enjoy their favorite tunes around the home or on-the-go. No matter how busy they get, parents can still be completely connected.

This holiday season get a gift that fits everyone's busy schedule. They may not stop often, but they will stop to appreciate the thoughtful gift.

Credit: (StatePoint)

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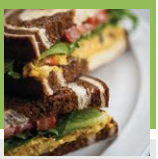

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GREAT GIFTS for OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

There's no better time than the holiday season to help your favorite outdoor thrill seekers gear up for all their upcoming adventures.

Even if the hiker, backpacker or climber you know already has their favorite gear, new innovations in outdoor products are helping both new and seasoned adventurers go further and higher.

Here are a few ways to find the ideal holiday gift for the outdoor enthusiast in your life:

Give Back

Help protect the environment that your gift recipient so passionately enjoys with eco-friendly gear. For example, you can buy hats, jackets and even boots made from recycled material.

2ND ANNUAL SANTA CRAWL

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2013

1PM

Join OC Weekly and Expo 4 Life in Newport Beach for the 2nd Annual Santa Crawl benefiting The Eli Home. Participants will frolic from bar to bar enjoying holiday cheer with food and drink specials, a costume contest and prizes! Make sure to find our Street Team and they will buy you a beer!

The festivities start at 1pm at Malarky's Irish Pub & Grill and then continue to Newport Beach Brewing Company, Avilas El Ranchito, and American Junkie.

A $20 donation and festive Santa attire is all you need to join the fun!

Visit www.ocweekly.com/holidays2013
for more info and to purchase tickets.

Malarky's Irish Pub & Grill · Avila's El Ranchito Mexican Restaurant · Newport Beach Brewing Company · American Junkie Newport Beach · OC Weekly · The Eli Home Breaking the Cycle of Child Abuse · Expo 4 life Health, Wellness & Lifestyle Events

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Even if you don't go the recycled route, you can shop with sustainability in mind by opting for durable gear that will last a lifetime. The less often a jacket, tent or sleeping bag needs replacing, the better for the environment.

Warm Up

Gone are the days where a simple down coat is the be-all and end-all of staying warm during an outdoor adventure. Now, technically advanced outdoor apparel, equipment and footwear are designed to fit the versatile needs of outdoor enthusiasts, offering lightweight options that offer warmth in varying weather conditions.

For example, the ThermoBall Jacket, recently unveiled by The North Face and awarded Editors' Choice by Backpacker Magazine, is made of a synthetic insulation that mimics the loft and warmth of a down cluster, with the added benefit of insulation retention when wet.

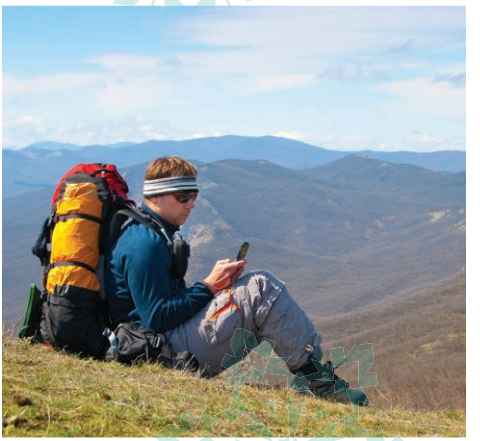
"This technology is inspired by the needs

of our athletes," says Joe Vernachio, Vice President at the North Face of global product Joe Vernachio. "And this insulation has been tested and approved by our climbing team in the Himalayas."

> **Gone are the days where a simple down coat is the be-all and end-all of staying warm during an outdoor adventure.**

Washable and durable, it's a good jacket for packing too, as it compresses neatly into its hand pocket. Look for lightweight ThermoBall insulated jackets and vests for your gift recipient at www.TheNorthFace.com.

Get Inspired



While your gift recipient may wish to be in the great outdoors all the time, that's not usually possible. Give him or her something to do between adventures with a good book or eBook. There are plenty of great outdoor adventure and travel memoirs that offer inspiration, even for someone who is curled up in bed. Or, consider purchasing a subscription to an outdoor adventure magazine.

This holiday season, keep your backpacker happy, warm and inspired.

Credit: (StatePoint)

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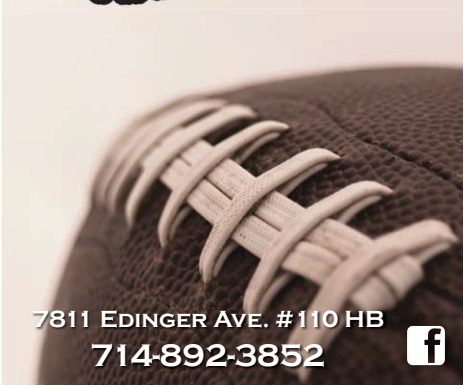

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CRANBERRY APPLE CRISP

WITH OATMEAL STREUSEL TOPPING

TOPPING:

- 1 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1 cup old-fashioned oats
- 3/4 cup all purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into pieces

FILLING:

- 1 12-ounce package of cranberries
- 1 1/4 lbs Golden Delicious or Fuji apples, peeled, cored, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons apple juice or cider

FOR TOPPING:

Combine brown sugar, oats, flour and salt in large bowl; toss to blend. Add butter and rub in with fingertips until mixture comes together in moist clumps. Cover, chill while preparing filing. *(Topping can be prepared 1 day ahead; keep chilled.)*

FOR FILLING:

Preheat oven to 375 F. Generously butter 13x9x2-inch glass baking dish. Combine cranberries, apples, sugar and apple juice in heavy large pot. Bring to boil over medium heat, stirring often. Boil until cranberries are tender and juices thicken slightly, about 5 minutes. Transfer filling to prepared dish. Sprinkle topping over.

Bake crisp until filling bubbles and topping is crisp and deep golden brown, about 40 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes. Serve with ice cream.

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CHERRY CHEESECAKE BARS

HOMEMADE PIE CRUST INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 c. graham crackers – 1 package of 9-10 crackers
- 1/3 c. sugar
- 6 Tbs. melted butter
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

CHEESECAKE & TOPPING INGREDIENTS:

- 2 1/12 packages (8 oz. each) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 c. of sugar
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon of almond extract
- 2 eggs
- 1 can of cherry pie filling

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Place parchment paper at the bottom of a 13x9-inch pan. Crush graham crackers until fine. Reserving 1 1/2 cups for topping and mix remaining graham crackers, sugar, melted butter, and cinnamon together. Press your remaining mix into the pan.

Bake 40-45 minutes until light golden brown. Allow to cool 30 minutes. Next, in a large bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar, flour, almond extract, and eggs with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Spread cream cheese mixture over the pie crust. Smooth cherry pie filling on top and sprinkle with reserved pie crust. Refrigerate 2 hours or until chilled. Cut into bars & serve.

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Downtown Long Beach
Holiday Gift Guide

Find the Perfect Gift in Downtown Long Beach

40 Downtown Deals to fit your holiday shopping needs.

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SAWDUST WINTER FANTASY
NOVEMBER 23- DECEMBER 15 | 6PM
SAWDUST ART FESTIVAL
935 LAGUNA CANYON RD | LAGUNA BEACH
949.494.3030 | Sawdustartfestival.org

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